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A dialogue about the etymology of Yiddish *páze*

1. Preliminaries

The Yiddish word *páze* ([¹pazə] in a more accurate transcription)¹ is classified in newer dictionaries as a preposition and glossed with “along” (French “le long de”, German “entlang”, Russian “вдоль”), or less commonly with “by, next to, close to” (French “à côté de”, German “dicht bei”). Its origin has not yet been explained successfully, although both Weinreichs, *père et fils*, suggested a borrowing of

1 All Yiddish word forms in this article are transcribed according to the YIVO standard, regardless of the actual spelling with Hebrew letters (which used to follow the German orthography in most modern texts before 1930s and in some afterwards). If a more precise notation is needed, it is given in square brackets and it makes use of the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet. – The original Yiddish script is employed sparingly here, and it is not standardized.

some Slavonic, but unspecified form: “[...] the (dial[ectal]) preposition *paze* ‘along’ (of obscure etymology)” (U. Weinreich 1958: 22=390, in the chapter on “Grammatical integration of Slavic-origin words”), “The preposition *paze* ‘along’ seems to be Slavic-component, but the etymology is not clear” (M. Weinreich 2008, II: A586).

However, not only the etymon of *páze* turns out to be unclear, but also its exact, in particular original meaning. The word seems rather infrequent in earlier texts, it may even have been dialectally restricted, and its usage can be interpreted in several ways, depending on the actual context.²

2. Yiddish *páze* in dictionaries

Let us begin with a survey of the major Yiddish lexicographical works. Curiously enough, as a preposition the word in question is absent from all older dictionaries, whether Yiddish-to-something or something-to-Yiddish,³ and it is only from the second decade of the twentieth century on that *páze* with this function begins to be recorded. Earlier works have it exclusively as an adverb, or they do not contain it at all, and the meanings later ascribed to this word are by contrast expressed by: *in der leng fun* and *leng-óys* (‘along’), or *lebn* / *nebn* and *ba(y)* (‘by, next to’), or the like.

The following reference books have been scrutinized (they are listed here in chronological order of their first edition):

- 1.1. Neither Lifšicъ (1881) [1869], nor Lifšicъ (1876) records this word.
- 1.2. Harkavy (1910) [1891/1893] has ‘close to’ *páze lebn* פֿאַזע לעבן (p. 79), which indirectly suggests that *páze* is an adverb here.

2 A Polish-born informant, not knowing this Yiddish preposition at all, when asked about the noun phrase *páze (dem) breg* ‘along the (river) bank’, reinterprets it as Polish *po zabrzeżu* ‘along the bank / shore’ (see: EYDES [<http://www.eydes.de/Usr6FB14B65BS/bin/a?A=50212-006.070.new3>]). – An overall map showing the distribution of Yiddish *páze* can be found at [<http://www.eydes.de/Usr2A760D63QX/index/wi2/bin/w?05E405BC05D005B705D605E2>] (last access: 25 January 2015).

3 The entries controlled as for the possible presence of *páze* are: English “along”, “next (to)”, “at”, “by”, “(at / by the) side”, “beside”, “close (to / by)”, “near”; Russian “вдоль”, “по”, “подле”, “возле”, “при”, “у”, “около”, “сбоку”, “бок (о бок с)”, “(в) ряд”, “рядом с”, “сторона (в стороне)”, “близ (вблизи)”, “близко (к / от)”, “поблизости”; Polish “wzdłuż”, “po”, “wedle”, “według”, “podług”, “wpodłuż”, “przy”, “u”, “koło”, “około”, “obok”, “bok (z boku)”, “blisko”, “poblize (w pobliżu)”.

- 1.3. Harkavy (1910) [1898] names the part of speech explicitly: *páze* פאַזע (adv.) ‘close’, *páze lebn* לעבן פאַזע ‘close by’ (p. 232).
- 1.4. Abelson (1915) does not register the word, and even in the flagship collocation of the later dictionaries, ‘along the river, alongshore’, it offers only: *in der leng fun breg* (p. 39).
- 1.5. Strack (1916) translates the word as an adverb: *páze* פאַזע ‘dicht, nahe’, but the illustrative phrase given there: *páze taykh* ‘dicht beim Flusse’ (p. 133) clearly points to a preposition, which would be its earliest lexicographical attestation; it is worth noting that the meaning is somewhat different from the standard wartime and post-war dictionaries (see below), but the inclination to combine it with the ‘river (bank)’ can already be observed here.
- 1.6. Harkavy (1928) [1925] repeats verbatim the information provided in an earlier version of this dictionary: *páze* פאַזע (adv.) ‘close’, *páze lebn* לעבן פאַזע ‘close by’ (p. 356).
- 1.7. Zaretski (1926) lists *páze* פאַזע among many other prepositions (p. 128), without a single word of comment or any textual example.
- 1.8. Mark (1929) does not know this word at all, which is rather puzzling considering its large size.
- 1.9. Vaysman (1931), in the “Explanations of more difficult words” appended to the literary chrestomathy for Yiddish schools, glosses *páze* פאַזע with *lebn* ‘near, beside, by’ (p. 278) – the very need for such an explanation on the part of a Jewish reader is indeed telling.⁴
- 1.10. Roxkind / Škljar (1940) labels it explicitly as a preposition and translates – for the first time – as ‘along’: *páze* פאַזע (prep.) ‘ΒΑΛΩΣ’ (p. 364).
- 1.11. Stutshkov (1950) lists *páze* פאַזע in three entries: 117. *gróysfarnèm* ‘great bulk’ between *in der leng* ‘lengthwise’ and *in der breyt* ‘across, crosswise’ (p. 91); 120. *nóentkeyt* ‘proximity’ (as *páze* פאַזע and *páze lebn* לעבן פאַזע) between *lem* ‘near’ and *nebn* ‘near, beside, by’ (p. 94); and 547. *aníves* ‘modesty, humility’ (as *geyn páze vant* גיין פאַזע וואַנט) between *nit shpríngen in di oygn* ‘to be inconspicuous’ and *geyn vi hinter der vant* ‘to sneak by’ (p. 618); the first of these entries seems to indicate that *páze* is here an adverb meaning something similar to ‘lengthwise, in length’, but no other source confirms such a sense.
- 1.12. U. Weinreich (s.a.) [1968] does not differ from the Soviet lexicon quoted above in either of its parts (Yiddish-English or English-Yiddish): *páze* פאַזע (prep) ‘along’ (p. 503) and ‘along’ *páze* פאַזע (p. 11).

4 The text containing *páze* in this chrestomathy is M. Roznfeld’s song “Zikhroynes” (Vaysman 1931: 238), quoted below in 2.2.

- 1.13. RES (1984) follows with exactly the same function and meaning, but it also adds a (or rather, *the*) collocation to illustrate its usage: *вдоль (предлог) páze* *וּלְפָנַי*, '*вдоль берега*' *páze dem breg* (p. 59), and *по (= вдоль) (предлог) páze* *וּלְפָנַי*, '*идти по берегу реки*' *geyn páze dem breg taykh* (p. 375).
- 1.14. Löttsch (1992) [1990] provides nothing new: *páze* [*páze* in the transcription used there] (Präp) '*entlang*', *páze dem breg* '*am Ufer entlang*' (p. 142).
- 1.15. Niborski, Vaisbrot, Neuberg (2011) [2002] as the only dictionary combines both meanings and both functions of this word, calling it explicitly a preposition: *páze* *וּלְפָנַי* (prep) '*le long de; à côté de*', *geyn páze vent* '*raser les murs*', but also implying its adverbial character: *páze lebn* '*tout près de*' (p. 430).
- 1.16. Astravux (2008) does not add anything to the meaning or function of the word in question: *páze* (prep.) '*паўз, поўз, вобач, ускрай, на краі, (на)ўсцяж, у(з)доўж, паўзбоч*', *geyn páze dem breg taykh* '*ісці ўсцяж берага (паўз бераг) ракі*', *geyn páze vent* '*туліцца / хінуцца да сцяны*' (p. 663), but it is the only lexicon to mention the etymology of Yiddish *páze*, deriving it from Ukrainian *новз* (dialectally also *ноз, поуз*) '*past, by; near, next to, close to; along(side)*' (SUM-11, VI: 645–646), and (implicitly) from Belorussian *наўз / ноўз* '*along(side); near, next to, close to; past, by; through; around*' (Сухун 1993: 224–225).

It seems that on the basis of these dictionaries alone one could sketch the following course of development of *páze*:

- ADVERB 'close, nearby' (Harkavy 1910 [1891/1893])
- > PREPOSITION 'close to, near, by, beside' (Strack 1916)
- > PREPOSITION 'along' (Roxkind, Škljar 1940)
- > ADVERB 'in length, lengthwise' (Stutshkov 1950),

although the earlier meanings have not been supplanted but rather supplemented by the later ones (cf. Niborski, Vaisbrot, Neuberg 2011 [2002]). Caution is, however, advised, as the time intervals between the appearance of the particular lexicons are not especially long.

One more explanation may be worth adding here: no role has apparently been played by the difference between *along*₁ '*on something long*', as in *to drive along the road* (Polish *jechać po ulicy / ulicą*, Russian *ехать по улице*) and *along*₂ '*beside something long*', as in *to walk along the river* (Polish *iść wzdłuż rzeki*, Russian *идти вдоль реки*), since in Yiddish both *páze dem taykh* '*along the river*' and *páze dem breg taykh* '*along the river bank*' are possible.

3. Yiddish páze in texts

The most reliable way to establish the meaning and syntactic properties of a word is, of course, to check its usage in original contexts, and for an etymological discussion the earliest attestations are of primary importance. For the time being, however, the corpus of searchable Yiddish texts is very limited, and the results are often less than satisfactory. After utilizing the *Corpus of Modern Yiddish* and the *Archiv jiddischer Texte*, and finally also *Google Books*, some fifteen or twenty examples of *páze* could be found, which document its use both in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the modern Yiddish literature. Here are some of the older of them (ordered roughly by the author's date of birth):

- 2.1. Gavriel Ravitsh (b. 1826, Vilnius – d. 1892, Saint Petersburg) “Riv mishpokho, oder reb Shmuel Hoferdig (2)” of 1865:

Shólem iz zikh gezésn in vegl gants rúik. Der ferd! iz gants gut gegángen. Mit a mol hot er zikh ópgeshtèlt. “Vos makht ir, bóbinke?” hot er a geshréy getón. “Got loyb, gezúnt” hot em geéntfert éyne álte froy, vos iz gegángen páze veg (אָנע פּאַזע) tsu fus. “Akh, dos zayt ir, r[eb] Shólem. Ikh hob aykh gor nit derként.” ([Ravitsh] 1865: 7–8)

‘Sholem got onto his little cart quite quietly. The horse was going quite well. All at once he stopped. “What is with you, old dear?” he exclaimed. “Praise be to God, I am healthy” answered him some elderly woman who was going along the road on foot. “Oh, it is you, Reb Sholem. I have not recognized you at all.”’

- 2.2. Moris Roznfeld (Morris Rosenfeld; actually, Moyshe Yankev Alter) (b. 1862, Boksze near Sejny – d. 1923, New York), “Zikhroynes” (being one of his “Lirishe lider”):

*Far dem tsayml nem mikh, Mótke! | Ikh vel zayn dayn ferd!
Nem dem shtrikl far a leyts, dem | shtekl far a shverd!
Marsh ahín af yéne bérglekh | in der fráyer luft
Ítske vart shoyt mit a bándé, – | hérstu vi er ruft?
Zest em afn shpits fun bergl, | dortn, páze taykh (פּאַזע טײַך)?
Akh, ir zíse kínder-yorn | vayt bin ikh fun aykh. (Roznfeld 1908: 198)*

‘Take me by the bridle, Motke, I will be your horse!
Take the string for reins, the stick for a sword!
March there, onto those hills, in the open air,
Itske is already waiting with a gang – can you hear him calling?’

Can you see him on the top of the hill, there, by / near / on the river?
Oh, you, sweet childhood years, how far I am from you.”⁵

- 2.3. Louis E. Miller (actually, L. Bandes) (b. 1866, Vilnius – d. 1927, New York), “Naye un alte Palestina (16)” of 1912:

Un kéyner hot dort nit gevóynt in yéner vístenish, vos iz páze Yáfe (פאַזע יפּו), nit ka mentsh un nit ka foygl, nor shakáln ba nakht, flegn dort arúmbldn-dzhen kúkdik fun der hoykh af dem vaytn blóyen yam un véynendik vi kínder fun húngr. (Miller 1912: 116)

‘And no one lived there in that waste which is round / near Jaffa, no man and no bird, only jackals used to wander about there at night, looking from above at the distant blue sea and crying like children from hunger.’

- 2.4. Tashrak (actually, Yisroel Yoysef Zevin) (b. 1872, Horki / Горки – d. 1926, New York), “Mister Shtokraykh un zayn tokhter” (“In di hoykhe fentster”, from the collection “Dos goldene land”), between 1893 and 1910:

Yedn shéynem frimórgn nokh frishtik, un yedn shéynem nókhmitog nokh “lontsh” flegn míses Shtókraykh un ir éyntsike zíbetsn-yérike tókhter, mis Ánabel, aróysforn in zéyer oytomobíl shpatsírn páze dem shéynem taykh Hódson (האָדסאָן טײַך שׂענהנעם טײַך פאַזע דעם שׂענהנעם טײַך פאַזע). (Zevin 1919, I: 89)

‘Every beautiful morning after the breakfast, and every beautiful afternoon after the lunch Mrs Stockreich and her only seventeen-year-old daughter, Miss Annabelle, used to go out in their automobile for a ride along the beautiful river Hudson.’

- 2.5. D. Novogrudski’s Yiddish translation of a Russian book for schoolchildren “Юный географ” (as “Yunger geograf”) of 1927:

“Dzhanéta” iz aróysgeshíkt gevórn tsu gefínen di úmgekùmene Fránklin’s ekspedítsye un iz aléyn geblíbn shtekn tsvishn di áyzberg, nebn di Náy-Sibirishe Índzlen. Di ráyznder hobn farlózn di shif un hobn zikh gelózt af kléyne shíflekh páze di tsófníke bregn fun Ázye (פאַזע דײַ צאַפּנדיקע ברעגן פון אַזיע). (Agapov et al. 1927: 95–96)

‘The [USS] *Jeannette* was dispatched to find the lost Franklin expedition, and it got stuck itself among icebergs, near the New Siberian Islands. The travellers left the ship and set out in small boats along the northern shores of Asia.’

5 The translation by Leo Summergrad (2012): ‘Take me by the bridle, “Motke”, I will be your horse, | Take a rope for the reigns [sic, for *reins*], a stick for a sword, | March there, on those hills, in the fresh air, | “Itchke” [sic] is waiting with a gang, Do you hear him calling? |

- 2.6. Lamed (actually, Levi Yoshue) Shapiro (b. 1878, Rzhyschiv / Ржищів – d. 1948, Los Angeles), “Gegesene teg (Vov)” of 1931:

Ba a gevisn punkt rayst zikh dos geróysh durkh tsvishn di berg páze taykh (פאַזע טייך) *mit a bazúnderer klórkeyt, m’volt gekónt shvern – dos shif geyt glaykh in shtot aráyn.* (Shapiro 1931: 91)

‘At a certain point the noise [= the whistle of a steamer’s hooter] breaks through between the mountains by / on the river with particular clarity, one could swear – the ship will right away enter the town.’

- 2.7. Itsik (Itzik) Manger (b. 1901, Chernivtsi / Чернівці – d. 1969, Gedera / גדרה), “Di mayses fun Hershl Zumervint” of 1930:

Kin Darabán iz gevén a mehálekh vegs. Barg-arúf, barg-aróp. Feld un vald, topólyes páze veg (פאַזע וועג). *Feygl un zúngold.* (Manger 1961: 358)

‘To Daraban [= Darabani, a small town in the present-day northeasternmost Romania] it was some distance. Uphill, downhill. Field and forest, poplars along / by the road. Birds and the gold of the sunlight.’⁶

- 2.8. Itsik Manger, introduction to the “Khumesh-lider” (being a part of his “Medresh Itsik”) of 1935:

Di dózike lándshaft mit íre vérbes páze veg (פאַזע וועג), *íre váynshl-sèder un íre móдне shtíle démerungen, tsíttert in mayn zikorn fun gor di frieste kínder-yorn.* (Manger 1951: 11)

‘This landscape – with its willows along / by the road, its cherry orchards and its odd silent dusks – has been vibrating in my memory since the very earliest childhood years.’⁷

- 2.9. Avrom Sutskever (Abraham Sutzkever) (b. 1913, Smarhoń / Смаргонь – d. 2010 Tel Aviv / תל-אביב), “Mayn khaverl Tshanguri (Alef)” (from his volume “Sibir”) of 1936:

Lómir zhlyóken klyátshemilkh fun logl
un af sóves makhn a geyég.

Do you see him on the top of the hill, on the other side of the river? | Oh, you sweet childhood years, I am so far from you.’ – In the light of Sh. Vaysman’s gloss (cf. 1.9. above), such a rendering of *páze* may be an overinterpretation.

- 6 The translation by Leonard Wolf (2002: 202): ‘It was some distance to Daraban, uphill and downhill, past field and forest, with poplars and birds and golden sunlight along the way.’
- 7 The translation by Leonard Wolf (2002: 3): ‘That landscape, with its roadside willows, its vineyards [sic], and its strange hushed twilights, has vibrated in my mind from the time of my earliest childhood.’

*Lómir, brúder, nokhn langn vogl
áynshlofn vi demólt páze veg* (פֿאַזע וועג). (Sutskever 1963: 18)

'Let us swill mare's milk from a skin,
and go on a hunt for owls.
After long wandering, brother, let us
fall asleep as then, by the side of the road.'

2.10. Avrom Sutskever, "Afn veg tsu Butslav" (from his volume "Di festung") of 1944:

*Farhált di ferd, genúg tsu baytshn,
un tut a vorf di kep ahinter:
tsvey ádelike, lánge Daytshn
marshírn dortn páze tsvínter* (פֿאַזע צווינטער). (Sutskever 1963: 353)

'Stop your horses, enough of whipping,
and turn your heads backwards:
two noble, long Germans
are marching there, by / along the graveyard.'

As can be seen, all of the above attest Yiddish *páze* as a preposition only. It can be ascribed two somewhat distinct meanings: 1. 'by, near, beside' (and perhaps also 'on the other side of', if L. Summergrad's translation quoted in footnote 5 is after all to be trusted), as well as 2. 'along'.¹⁰

Quite many examples (over twenty different collocations) which can be gleaned from various articles published in the "Forverts" in recent years do not really contribute to the case. The preposition can in most cases be translated as either 'by, beside' or 'along'. The more interesting attestations include: *shoséy, vos geyt páze der shtot* 'a highway which runs by / along the city', *dos lánge bergl páze Bronks* 'a long hill next to / along Bronx', *af der*

8 The translation by Daniel Kac (2004: 252): 'Będziemy żłopać mleko kłaczy z bukłaka i pędzić za uciekającymi sowami. Śpijmy, braciszku, po długim wędrowaniu, jak wówczas przy krawędzi drogi.'

The translation by Barbara and Benjamin Harshav (1991: 87): 'Let us gulp mare's milk from goatskin bag, | Start a hunt of owls in light of day. | Let us, after long carousing, sag, | Fall asleep as then, slumped by the way.'

9 The translation by Mosze Chaim Porajer (Kac 2004: 172): 'Zatrzymaj konie bracie miły | I spojrzij wstecz, poraduj oczy | Oto przez pola, gdzie mogiły | Para niemieckich jeńców kroczy.' – The preposition *przez* 'across, through' used here is probably brought about by metrical reasons.

10 The closest semantic equivalent of *páze* seems (older or dialectal) Polish *wedle* 'close to, in the vicinity of (*karczmy* 'inn', *stołu* 'table'); along (*plota* 'fence', *drogi* 'lane'); round (*ogniska* 'bonfire')', which in the standard language is used only as 'according to'.

länger promenáde páze dem yam ‘on a long promenade by / along the sea’; also figuratively: *der amóliker mízrekh-eyropèisher yídisher klal tsefált zikh af shtíker páze polítish-geográfishe grénetsn un gezélshaftlekhe shpáltungen* ‘the former East-European Jewish community falls apart into pieces along the political-geographical borders and social divisions’, *di yídische kultúr-geshikhte loyft foróys páze farplónterte un tsu mol krúme shlyakhn* ‘the Jewish cultural history runs along tangled and sometimes crooked ways’.

4. Germanic etymology

As with any Yiddish word of doubtful origin, it is most reasonable to try to solve the problem within the largest component of this language, that is the Germanic one. The syntactic and semantic characteristics of *páze*, as they emerge from the reference works and textual examples quoted above, require that the etymon searched for should be an adverb or a preposition (or both) and have the meaning ‘near, by’ or ‘along’ (or both). Now, the Middle High German language (= MHG) knows the adverb *besît* (also *besîte* and *besîten*), being a phonetically reduced compound of *bî* ‘by, at, near, to, ...’ and *sîten*, Dative-Accusative of *sîte* ‘side, flank’ (for the vowel reduction $\hat{i} > e [\text{ə}]$, see Paul 1953: 72). Admittedly, in the “Taschenwörterbuch” by Lexer (1992: 17) the adverb is glossed only as ‘to the side, aside’ (“beiseits, zur seite”), however in the more extensive “Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch Online” it has another meaning too, namely ‘at / by one’s side, to one’s side’ (“an der Seite, (jmdm.) zur Seite”). This latter sense, which semantically (although not syntactically) tends also slightly towards a preposition, is there illustrated, among others, with the following citations:

- 3.1. *Ludewic trûc den heiden nît, | hindene, vorn und besît | mit craft ir rote er durch-brach* (“Die Kreuzfahrt des Landgrafen Ludwigs des Frommen von Thüringen” of 1301, lines 2317–2319) ‘Ludwig brought to the heathens his fierceness, at the back, at the front and at the sides with his strength he broke through their ranks.’
- 3.2. *si wâren selten eine, | si wonden zallen [= ze allen] zîten | einander besîten* (Hartmann von Aue, “Gregorius” of ca 1190, lines 288–290) ‘they were seldom alone, they stayed at all times side by side with one another / close to each other.’

It seems therefore that the MHG adverb *besît* ‘at / by one’s side’, which would have developed in Yiddish into a preposition along the same lines as English *beside(s)*, *near* or *close (to)*, Russian *рядом (c)*, Polish *obok* or *z boku*, can be suggested as the etymon of *páze*, once the phonetic obstacles have been

overcome. The only sound of *besît* [bə'zi:t] which can be regarded as having a fully regular continuation in Yiddish *páze* ['pazə] is the intervocalic *s* [z] (one would expect **bezáy*t ~ (*)*bazáy*t). It does not mean however that the remaining sounds would constitute absolutely unique correspondences; they can all be explained by adducing parallel examples, even if sometimes limited in number:

- 4.1. The change of MHG *b* > Yiddish *p* is rare, and usually ascribed to the influence of Middle German neutralization of the opposition between voiced and voiceless plosives (M. Weinreich 2008, II: 435–438, A482–A483, A545). E.g. Yiddish *póyer* 'peasant' < MHG *bûr(e)* (> Modern German *Bauer*), *pukl* 'bump' < *buckel* (> *Buckel*), *púter* 'butter' < *buter* (> *Butter*), *gopl* 'fork' < *gabel(e)* (> *Gabel*), *nepl* 'fog' < *nëbel* (> *Nebel*), *nopl* 'navel' < *nabel(e)* (> *Nabel*); also Yiddish *préglen* 'to fry' < MHG *brëglen* / *brëgeln*, and Yiddish *peym* 'penny, small coin (of three groschen)' vs Modern German *Böhm* 'small silver coin, once minted in Bohemia' &c.¹¹
- 4.2. The development of MHG *e* [ə] > Yiddish *a* in the immediately pretonic syllable is quite common (Sapir 1951: 263), as can be seen in various unstressed prefixes: Yiddish *ba-* < MHG *be-*, *far-* < *ver-*, *ant-* < *en(t)-*, *ar-* (e.g. *aróp* 'downwards') < *hër-*, *a-* (e.g. *ahér* 'hither') < *ën-*.
- 4.3. The stress retraction to the first syllable is frequent in earlier Slavonic borrowings (U. Weinreich 1958: 21=389; M. Weinreich 2008, II: 570–572, 587–589 et passim), e.g. Yiddish *lópete* 'spade, shovel' < Polish *łopáta* / Ukrainian *лопáта* (Belorussian *лапáта*, Russian *лопáта*), Yiddish *málene* ['malənə] 'raspberry' < Polish *malína* / Ukrainian *малíна* / Belorussian *малíна* / Russian *малíна*, *krópeve* 'nettle' < Ukrainian *кروطівá* (Belorussian *кранівá*, Russian *кранíва*) &c; it can also have extended to the Germanic vocabulary (in which non-prefixed words are stressed initially by default). Moreover, the shift of accent from the final syllable to the penultimate (or even farther) is standard in the Hebrew elements that entered Yiddish (M. Weinreich 2008, II: 377–379 et passim).

11 Furthermore, M. Weinreich (2008, II: A483) derived both Yiddish *bisl* 'bit' and *pitsl* 'tiny bit, shred' from MHG *biz* ~ *biz* 'bite' + diminutive *-(e)l* (> southern Modern German (*ein*) *bissel* 'a bit, a little'), which would constitute a very nice parallel for the split of MHG *bî* > Yiddish *ba(y)* versus MHG *besît* (< *bî* + *sîten*) > Yiddish *páze*. According to Altbauer (2002: 130, 155), however, Yiddish *pitsl* goes back to MHG *bützel* 'little dwarf' (= *butze* 'dwarf, goblin, poltergeist' + diminutive *-(e)l*), thus being just another example of MHG *b* > Yiddish *p*, with no split involved.

- 4.4. The reduction of MHG *î* [i:] > Yiddish *e* [ə] would just be the result of this stress retraction, as unaccented vowels (including long ones and diphthongs) have commonly been reduced in Yiddish, and this affected even stem syllables, as long as they belonged to the second element of a compound word and were hence deprived of stress (Sapir 1951: 263; M. Weinreich 2008, II: 632–634). E.g. Yiddish *árbes* ‘pea’ < MHG *areweiz* ~ *arwîz* ~ *arwîs* (> Modern German *Erbse*), *árbet* ‘work’ < *ar(e)beit* (> *Arbeit*), *bórves* ‘barefoot’ < *barvuoz* (> *barfuß*), *váyrekh* ‘incense’ < *wî(h)rouch* (> *Weihrauch*), also *bronfn* [ˈbrɔnfɪn] ‘liquor, whisky’ < *gebranter wîn* (> *Branntwein*; cf. Pfeifer 2005: 165) &c.
- 4.5. The disappearance of the final *t* presents the greatest problem of all. It can hardly be ascribed to frequency (as in e.g. *ist* > *is* ‘is’ already in Middle High German, Yiddish *iz*; also MHG *und(e)* / *unt* > Yiddish *un* ‘and’) for the word is quite rare; neither is there any consonantal cluster to be held responsible for this reduction (cf. e.g. Yiddish *mark* ‘market’ < MHG *mark(e)t*, *kunts* ‘trick’ < *kunst*). Thus the only possibility seems the anticipatory voicing assimilation and the subsequent simplification of the geminate appearing in the combination with the definite article: **pázet dem / der / di* > **[ˈpazəd_d...]* > *[ˈpazə_d...]*. This could be supported by such prefixed Yiddish forms as e.g. *antdrém̩lt* [anˈdr̩m̩lt] ‘dozed-off’, *avékgebn* [aˈv̩ɛgɛbm̩] ‘to give away’, *ópbershtn* [ˈɔ̩bɛʁʃtn̩] ‘to brush off’ &c.

It stands to reason that the changes 4.2.–4.4. must have taken place in exactly this order, while 4.1. and 4.5. are chronologically independent and can have been carried out at any given moment.

Consequently, Yiddish *páze* would constitute the next, and quite decided, step in the reduction of MHG *besît* (which is in turn a reduction of the phrase *bî sîten*), with the additional stress retraction and irregular, but by no means unique, development of *b* > *p*. The syntactic aspect of this etymology (from adverb to preposition) is banal, and the semantic one (the extension of ‘by, near’ to cover also ‘along’) should not be regarded as a grave problem. Each phonetic change by itself should not pose an insurmountable difficulty either – it is only their extraordinary accumulation in this word that may restrain one from accepting this explanation.

One more remark can be made here: The Modern Yiddish language knows also the expressions *bazáyit (fun)* ‘at the side (of)’ (RES: 500, 559; Astravux 2008: 140) and *ba(y) der zayt (fun)* ‘id.’ (RES: 500; Astravux 2008: 885), but these must be interpreted as newer formations, coined after MHG *besît* had already developed beyond recognition. A similar process operated in German,

where early modern adverb *beseit* (regularly < MHG *besît*) has been replaced with *beiseite* ‘aside’ (< *bei* + *Seite*), the only trace of the former being the derived verb *beseitigen* ‘to remove’ (Pfeifer 2005: 1274).

5. Slavonic etymology

According to what has been discussed in the previous sections, technically speaking, there exists a possibility that Yiddish *páze* may have a Germanic origin. If however – not satisfied with this etymology on account of the phonetic obstacles – one would like to turn to the Slavonic component of Yiddish, two prepositional complexes immediately suggest themselves:

- 5.1. Polish *poza* ‘behind; beyond, outside; apart / aside from’, and (all with identical meaning) Ukrainian *nóza* ~ *nozá*, Belorussian *na-za* (*na-zá*), Russian *no-zá* ‘behind; beyond, outside’
- 5.2. Ukrainian *novz* (dialectally also *noz*, *noyз*¹²) ‘past, by; near, next to, close to; along(side)’ (SUM-11, VI: 645–646), Belorussian *nažz* / *nožz* ‘along(side); near, next to, close to; past, by; through; around’ (Cyxun 1993: 224–225),

the latter already put forward by Astravux (2008: 663). The first series mentioned seems attractive for phonetic (but not semantic) reasons, while the second – for semantic (but not phonetic) ones.

These prepositional complexes (in Russian “парные предлоги-сращения”, cf. Švedov 1980, I: 705) are a rather common phenomenon in Slavonic. A cursory examination of etymological dictionaries will quickly reveal that their etymology is uncontroversial. The two series above share the same basic, or root, preposition, that is, Polish *po*, Ukrainian *no*, Belorussian *na*, Russian *no* – all meaning, among other things, ‘on (*the grass*), along (*the road*), (all) over (*the floor*), round (*the shops*)’. The second preposition is *za* ‘behind’ and *-vz* < **vъz* ‘up(wards)’, respectively (note that the latter element does not appear independently, but always attached to another preposition or, as a perfectivizing prefix *v(o)z-*, to verbs of movement). The complex *po-vz* is limited to the East Slavonic territory (cf. Kopečný 1973: 204–205; Bevzenko 1978: 447; Cyxun 1993: 224–225; ESUM: 467a, 479a).

12 For the sound change *v* [v] > *y* [u] before a consonant in Ukrainian, see Žovtobryx (1979: 225–227).

Russian *по-за* is now seen as an obsolete word, usually not included in smaller, contemporary dictionaries (it can, however, be found in larger dictionaries as well as in older or historical ones, e.g. *Dalʹ* 1880–1882, III: 223; Evgenʹeva 1981–1984, III: 236). The table below shows the contrast in Belorussian-Russian translations:

Belorussian (TSBLM: 420b)	Russian (BRS: 584a)	meaning
<i>на-за гарáмі</i>	<i>за горáми</i>	‘beyond the mountains’
<i>на-за гóрадам</i>	<i>за гóродом</i>	‘beyond the city’
<i>на-за чáсам</i>	<i>вне врéмени</i>	‘beyond time and space’
<i>і прастóрай</i>	<i>и прострáнства</i>	

All the forms of the series 5.1. are well attested in these four languages as early as the fifteenth-sixteenth century (see the entries in etymological dictionaries quoted above as well as SP16: 295b for Polish and SRJa11–17: 105 for Russian), and all except the Russian one are still in common use, so they can easily be taken into consideration as possible etymons of the Yiddish preposition in question. The adaptation of (East) Slavonic *po-za* into Yiddish *páze* would involve the following sound changes:

- 6.1. *Akanie* in the Slavonic form. Since *akanie* (the [a]-like realization of unstressed /o/) is the most pervasive feature of Belorussian, recorded already in documents of the fifteenth-sixteenth century, it seems advisable to assume from the outset that the source of Yiddish *páze* is to be sought in the Belorussian territory. Hence, Belorussian *на-за* [pa'za] → pre-Yiddish **pazá*.
- 6.2. Stress retraction in Yiddish: **pazá* > **páza* (see 4.3. above).
- 6.3. Reduction of the final vowel: **páza* > *páze* ['pazə] (see the examples in 4.3. and 4.4.).

Neither of Weinreichs mentions explicitly the etymon of Yiddish *páze*, so it is open to discussion whether they actually had in mind that the most likely origin of this word is from Slavonic *po-za*, especially as its meaning differs substantially from the Yiddish one.¹³ Therefore, let us now consider the series 5.2., that is Ukrainian *новз* (*ноз, нояз*) ‘near; along(side) &c’ and Belorussian *наўз* / *ноўз*

13 But note the translation of *páze taykh* as ‘on the other side of [i.e. behind] the river’ quoted in footnote 5.

‘along(side); near; around &c’, both matching perfectly the sense of Yiddish *páze*.¹⁴ Astravux’s suggestion, the motivation of which seems purely semantic, presents serious problems regarding its phonetics, as there are no cognate sets showing the sound correspondence: Belorussian *aŭ* [aw] ~ *oŭ* [ow] or Ukrainian *oy* [ou] = Yiddish *á*. By the same token, if we assume that Ukrainian *нобз* was the point of departure, then there are no parallels accounting for the special development of *-vz* > *-zə* in Yiddish (according to what we know, final clusters similar to *-vz* are allowed in Yiddish and therefore reduction is not expected here, cf. Jacobs 2005: 118–119). It may seem more natural to begin with (dialectal) Ukrainian *ноз*, but although this would considerably simplify the consonantal side of the equation, it would not solve the vocalic problems by any means, as there is no apparent reason to assume the presence of any phonetic need leading to a paragogic *ə*; neither is Ukrainian *o* = Yiddish *á* easy to explain.

The formal divergence between Ukrainian *но(в/у)з* and Belorussian *на/oŭз* on the one hand and Yiddish *páze* on the other could be reduced by invoking contamination (merger) of the former two with Slavonic *po-za*, especially with Belorussian *на-за*. A merger of both series of the Slavonic prepositional complexes in Yiddish seems all the more possible, as there are no traces of any of them in Yiddish independently. Due to the distribution of the prepositions and of *akanie*, it goes without saying that the process of contamination in Yiddish most probably took place in the Belorussian-speaking environment. In other words, the form of Belorussian *на-за* ‘behind; beyond, outside’ and the meaning of Belorussian *наŭз* ‘along(side); near; around &c’ resulted in Yiddish *páze* ‘near, by; along’, while other Slavonic languages (Polish, Ukrainian, Russian) might somewhat have supported this development.

6. Conclusions

From the preceding discussion it emerges that the Germanic etymology is burdened with rather serious phonetic problems, while the Slavonic one assumes that the contamination of two foreign prepositions has been carried out in Yiddish, since no such confusion is recorded in the (East) Slavonic languages. So if neither of them is fully satisfactory by itself, we can cautiously put forward an idea making use of both the Western and the Eastern etymology, namely

14 Forms without *akanie* in Belorussian, i.e. *ноŭз* and also *ноз*, are restricted to the southernmost dialects, that is those under the influence of Ukrainian (see Avanesaŭ et al. 1963: 766–767 – commentary and map 221).

that Yiddish *páze* does go back to its Germanic roots (MHG *besît* 'at one's side'), but it has very strongly been influenced by Slavonic phonetics (Belorussian *na-3a*) and semantics (Belorussian *naŭ3* 'along; near; around').

It must be noted that the many different merger scenarios suggested above cannot be rejected out of hand, as they are all, one way or the other, reminiscent of the well-known cases of Germano-Slavonic blends in Yiddish, such as *pamé-lekh* 'slow(ly), tard(il)y', which is said to be the result of mixing MHG *gemechlich* 'slow, calm' (> Modern German *gemächlich*) or MHG *almechlich* 'gradual, slow' (> *allmählich*) with Polish *pomału* 'slowly' (U. Weinreich 1955: 604–605; see also M. Weinreich 1956). In the same paper U. Weinreich (1955: 605) mentions some Yiddish localisms from the Belorussian area, also being blends, e.g. *hleyim* 'clay' < Yiddish *leyim* (cf. Modern German *Leim*) × Belorussian *гліна* 'clay' or *hron* 'horn' < Yiddish *horn* (cf. Modern German *Horn*) × Belorussian *рог* 'horn'. The last example is especially interesting as it demands the presence of a non-trivial sound change (metathesis). Particularities of the historical phonology and morphosyntax of German, Slavonic and Yiddish lead to a somewhat confusing although, from a Yiddish viewpoint, typical state of affairs whereby Germanic (MHG *besît*) and Slavonic elements (Belorussian *na-3a* and *naŭ3*) have been conflated in Yiddish *páze*.

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